**NEurodivergent peer Support Toolkit (NEST) Launch-20240613\_155943-Meeting Recording**

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 **Charlotte Webber** started transcription

 **Charlotte Webber** 0:04
Great.
OK. Welcome everyone. We're going to start in just a couple of minutes, but we'll just give everyone a little while longer to start filtering in. So take a moment just to make yourself comfortable before we start.
OK, I'll get us started then. Welcome everyone to the launch of Nest, the Neurodivergent peer support toolkit. I'm going to start by just doing a little bit of housekeeping before we kick off. So you might have noticed already that your cameras and microphones have been automatically disabled and there's no chat between participants in the session today. If you'd like to ask questions, you can do so throughout the session using the Q&A feature. So depending which version of teams you're using, you should be able to find the Q&A icon, perhaps at the bottom or the top of your screen.
And you'll be able to post questions in there throughout. We're going to have AQ and a section at the end of the session. So that's when we'll get back to answering your questions. But do feel free to drop things in there as we're going along. If anything comes to mind.
One thing to note is that the Q&A function might not be anonymous depending on how you've logged into teams, so do bear that in mind as you're asking questions and if you're sharing experiences, please don't share personal information without permission of the person whose experiences you're sharing. If you'd like to turn on live captions, you can click on the caption button within Microsoft Teams and select turn on captions.
The final thing to note is the event is being recorded this afternoon and the recording and the transcript and the slides from today will be made available after the event on the website.
So I will now officially welcome you all to the launch of Nest, the Neurodivergent peer support tool kit. This is a project that's been running since 2022, and it's the culmination of lots of hard work from many, many different people. So we're really excited that you're here to join us today. My name is Charlotte Webber. I'm the postdoctoral research fellow who's been working on the project for the last six months or so, and I'm going to be sort of chairing the session this afternoon.
So we'll start today with just some introductions to the people that have been working on the nest project for the last few years. We'll then hear from Professor Sue Fletcher Watson, who's going to talk about why we developed the Nest toolkit in the 1st place. We'll then hear from Doctor Sarah Foley who's going to talk to us about how we develop nest and the Co design process. And at that point, we'll also hear from some members of our Co design teams as well.
I will then introduce you to the nest resources in a little bit more detail and show you.
What's in there so you can get a sense of what you'll get if you download the resource pack and the handbook, and we'll then hear from Doctor Katie Sabula, who will talk us through the nest feasibility study. And we'll hear some insights from of our pilot from some of our pilot schools who set up nest groups last year. And finally then I'll come back to talk you through the next steps. So if you'd like to to download nest to use in your school or you're just curious, I will tell you how to do that towards the end of the session.
And then we'll finish off with the Q&A right at the very end.
So the first thing to do is to introduce you to everyone who's been working on the nest project for the last few years. You can see we've had a great many people who've been involved in the project, and we're going to hear from a number of them this afternoon. So you can see we've got a research team at the University of Edinburgh, but we've also got two Co design groups, a neuro divergent Young Person, Co design group and an adult Co design group. And as I mentioned, Sarah's going to talk to you a little bit more about the Co design process a bit later, but this is just to say, upfront a big thank you to all of the people that have been involved in the project so far.
OK, so before I tell you a little bit more about nest, we thought it would be a good idea to just give you a little bit of an overview of some of the the terms we might be using this afternoon. We know that many people here today might be very familiar with some of this terminology, but we also know that some people are coming to this quite new. So we just wanted to give a little bit of an overview of some of the words you might hear this afternoon. So if we look at the box on the top left hand corner of the screen, we can see five different coloured smiling squares and this is to represent the idea that most people are neurotypical. And this is because they are the largest group in terms of the way they think.
And process information. Now, of course, there are differences between a neurotypical people. Not all neurotypical brains work in the same way, but they tend to fall within a majority. Or we might call it a neuro majority. And because the majority of brains think and perceive and process information this way, the way this way of thinking, perceiving, processing, and learning is often thought of as quote UN quote normal. But what's really important to emphasise is just because the brain doesn't work in the same way as the majority, it doesn't mean that it's not normal.
If we move across to the box on the top right, we can see a little smiling circle and this represents a neurodivergent person. Now, if someone is neurodivergent, it means that they process information differently from most other people, perhaps because they're dyslexic, autistic, or have ADHD. They might have a number of different conditions. They might have a diagnosis, they might be on the waiting list, or they might not have a diagnosis at all. If we come down to the bottom left box, we can see a smiling circle, a triangle, and a square.
And this is to represent the concept of neurodiversity. So neurodiversity is the fact that people process information differently from one another, and that people learn in a variety of different ways.
Coming across to the final box on the bottom, we can see lots of different coloured smiling shapes and this is to represent a neuro diverse group. So a group of people who think and process information differently to each other can be described as a neuro diverse group. So a single person can't be neurodiverse on their own. They might identify as neurotypical or neurodivergent, and then when they come together.
Group could be described as neurodiverse.
So I'm going to talk to you now a little bit about what nest actually is. I'm going to come on much later to give you more in depth insight into what is actually in the the nest resource, but I thought before we go on to talking to you about why we developed it and how we developed it, it'd be good to give you a very top line introduction to what it is. So the nest resources include a handbook and a resource pack which help mainstream secondary schools set up peer support groups for neurodivergent students.
And we'll hear a little bit later about what peer support actually is.
But throughout the session, we'll refer to these groups as nest groups. Now I'd like to say up front that nest groups are not intended to be part of the curriculum. They're not compulsory for any student. The idea is that they're fun opportunity for neurodivergent pupils to build connection and community, engage in their choice of activities, and explore their neurodivergent identity. And when we hear about the the pilot schools a little bit later, we'll hear some examples of the types of activities that nest groups might get up to. So that's a very brief overview. And as I mentioned, we'll talk.
More detail a bit later about what's in those resources, but I'm going to pass over now to Professor Sue Fletcher Watson, who's going to talk to you about why we developed nest in the first place.

 **Sue Fletcher-Watson** 7:40
Charlotte and hello everyone.
Yeah. So I guess the the underlying kind of statistics here are that about 16% of students in Scottish schools could be considered neurodivergent. That's about one in seven students and the vast majority of these students are educated in mainstream classes. So they're muddling along often with a majority neurotypical group of pupils.
For whom? The kind of school system was sort of set up with them in mind.
And so for neurodivergent kids at school, sometimes there can be some challenges and the kinds of challenges that we were interested in are really about sort of relationships and experiences at school beyond just how you're learning. So we know from research and from just what lots of young people and their families say that many neurodivergent people at school will experience difficulties, difficulties building relationships with other pupils for lots of neurodivergent folk, it can be quite hard to understand yourself, let alone.
And get other people to understand you and build kind of really lovely friendships that that can come from that understanding. Sadly, many neurodivergent pupils will be bullied and perhaps unsurprisingly, as a result of these things, lots of people talk about not really feeling like they belong when they're at school.
There have been attempts to improve things for neurodivergent young people, often focusing on peer support, but the traditional model of peer support is very much to pair a neurodivergent student with a neurotypical student.
And the kind of goal here is to help that neurodivergent young person develop a kind of set of traditional neurotypical social skills to fit in a bit better.
To to kind of, you know, go along with the norms in the school community. And of course, this doesn't. This in fact does the opposite of enabling that neurodivergent young person to develop their own positive sense of identity and find their own way of thriving in the school environment.
So we wanted to do a different kind of peer support with the nest tool kit.
Charlotte, if you could take us to the next slide. Thank you. So the first bit of work that we did was talking to autistic school leavers. So we already knew that autistic adults were finding peer support really helpful. For example, people who get a diagnosis in adult an adulthood will often make connections with other autistic people, and that can be a really positive part of that journey. But it hadn't really been explored in young people. So we did this research study where we were asking.
Recent school leavers.
Whether they would have liked peer support with other autistic students and we were focused on autism really just because that was, you know, where our research was situated at the time. So our participants were really keen on the idea of peer support where those peers were other autistic students or neurodivergent students. But a really strong finding was that they wanted it to be broader than just autism. They wanted a peer support model that was open to all neurodivergent students in the school.
They talked about how peer support groups could create a more inclusive environment, create a space to be with kind of like minded peers to feel like you're in a space where you belong, a safe place to be yourself. It could create opportunities for neurodivergent students to share similar experiences and build a sense of kind of community within the broader school. So that's the motivation behind why we did nest and I will hand back to Charlotte. I think we're going to hear from some of their Co designers.

 **Charlotte Webber** 11:29
We are. Thank you very much, Sue. Yes, we're now going to hear from Rose. Rose is an educational psychologist and was one of the members of our adult Co design team. And we've just got a short video from Rose talking about why she thinks nest groups could be particularly important for neurodivergent pupils in school.
I think that we're seeing an increasing number of children, young people with additional support needs in our schools and in our mainstream schools.
And although there is an increasing awareness of neurodiversity, and trying to meet those needs in schools, it's still quite a challenge sometimes for schools to know how best to meet a variety of individual needs. And one of the best ways to try and tackle that is thinking about inclusion at a universal level, which I think this programme really supports. I think it also we know that for young people, identity is such a big thing at at.
A young person at that point in your life.
And the importance of a sense of belonging within our school community and a wider community, and the impact that that then has on our well-being and therefore our engagement in school. And so by having these groups that are neuro affirming and and supporting that identity of young people and are inclusive and providing opportunities for them to be their authentic selves.
It's it's a win win in my eyes in terms of the impact that that then can have.
In that individual's engagement, but across the whole school community as well, like also for staff, I think it's really important in terms of staff that might engage with it as the facilitator, how that links with whether they are neurodiverse themselves or an ally, and what that looks like. I think that's really important and building that neuro affirming practise across the whole school setting.
And it also.
It's puts young people at the heart of it, that, at least in a Scottish context, is really important in terms of.
Right for every child and thinking about how children's rights are part of Scottish law now and providing those opportunities for schools to really embed that practise.
And some of the some of the areas, I guess that the group can focus on, I think the aspect of advocacy as well as peer support in terms of interest in socialising that advocacy aspect is something that's a life skill that's really important for life beyond school.
And a really important way for young people to be able to to learn those skills and practise them in a safe environment.
Great. OK. So now we've heard a little bit about why we think nest groups are important and why we decided to to to start the project. I'm going to pass you over now to Doctor Sarah Foley, who's going to talk about how we develop nest and then we'll hear again from Rose and from Harriet, who is another member of one of our Co design groups talking about their experience of being part of a Co design group. So I'll pass over to Sarah now.

 **Sarah Foley** 14:47
Yeah. Thanks, Charlotte. Yeah. So I guess we've heard already a little bit about why, so I get the the job of explaining about how and at this point, I'd really also wanted to give a huge shout out and thank you to Francesca fathering home, who's pictured here, all smiley herself on the screen, and Fran really facilitated this Co design phase of the project. And so we've mentioned the word Co design a couple of times. So I guess some of you might be thinking, well, what does that mean? Is that just what buzzword is this?
So Co design is referring to a sort of participatory, a participatory approach. When we think about trying to design things, trying to design solutions and crusades when community members are treated as equal collaborators in that design process.
And only equal collaborators, but experts through their lived experience and in this case the key principle is to think about ensuring the rights of young people are respected and included.
And that's important again as we think about what rose just said in terms of respecting children's voice.
Ensuring that their human rights are being respected and so in doing Co design, they aim really then is to think about making sure that the end product. So in this case the resources that we were trying to create that they were acceptable and relevant and accessible to young people themselves and also to the people who would be sort of facilitating them as well. So people like hopefully you guys in the audience.
So we yeah, had two Co design teams, so we worked.
One group of neurodivergent young people. These were young people aged 13 to 15, and all of them had experience of a Scottish mainstream high school. All of them identified as neurodivergent, so that identification is important because as we sort of alluded to at the start, we didn't feel like it was necessary as an eligibility criteria for the Co design team members to have a formal diagnosis. We know there's lots of barriers to getting that.
In terms of, you know, clinical factors, insufficient funding.
Resources at the list goes on, and these neuro divergent young people reported autism, ADHD, dyslexia. Many multiple of these, and then the we had a adult Co design team and there was nine members of the Adult Co design team and they were from a variety of different professions. So we had some education psychologists, speech and language therapists, members of charities and many also parents too.
Of the 9.
Except they were neurodivergent themselves. I think again, we had people talking identifying ADHD, autism, dyslexia and multiple too. So those were our two teams. And the reason that we had two, we, although we the voices sort of fed through both of those teams, they didn't meet together. Now is to make sure that everyone could sort of speak, you know, authentically and weren't put and wasn't a imbalance of power or any sort of dynamic.
Yeah. And so each group met separately 6 times, and these meetings were held online and they were held at weekly intervals during the summer holiday. So we'd really do, you know, all these Co design members, a real thanks for that. And they were about an hour, an hour and a half each. And we held them online for lots of different reasons. But it enabled sort of a wider geographic reach. So, you know, we had a range of people across Scotland taking part, although we are aware that, you know, holding something online does rule out some people's participation.
So the the different meetings had different topics. We didn't have completely a blank canvas when we had these different meetings. So Francesca would have some different topics that were introduced during the first meeting about an idea of the way in which the six meetings could go and the things that could be discussed. But these would really just simple introductions and they were used as a gentle guide. It wasn't at all prescriptive members of the Codesign team could suggest changes to the agenda.
Suggest their own topics and things like this so the Members would be told about the topic before their meeting. So for example you know what type of peer support activities might they be thinking about during that meeting.
And then that the topic was introduced and then Francesca just really facilitated a very active discussion between the Co design team members during that meeting.
After that meeting, minutes would be and almost a transcript would be sent to the different team members.
So the the day after the meetings so they could have a look to see how they whether their views had been accurately captured and importantly whether they wanted to add something. So I often do, you know, after the fact, think, oh, actually, I think this would be a good thing to think about as well.
And a testament to the Co design team members.
Interest and enthusiasm for the project, others sometimes couldn't attend a meeting and would contribute via e-mail or call to make sure that their views were heard there.
And you'll see here as well a little QR code on the screen, and I think there was a question about sharing the slides and that will everything will be sent out afterwards. But for that QR code is a link to a journal article which explains and describes this Co design process. And importantly, this article's Open Access. So that means that anybody can download it for free. And so if you're really interested in learning a bit more about this Co design process, you can have.
You can download that link there.
In it, we talk about that process and the sort of the themes emerging from the discussion in terms of what the nest resources, you know, what the young people and what the facility the adults thought would be.
What they wanted from that pedest peer support programme, so three key themes emerged from these this of looking at all of the.
The meetings that we put together, so the importance of the the facilitator thinking about needing a sort of an attuned enthusiastic advocate.
The principle of inclusivity, thinking about the students, but also the practise and the flexibility of the group itself, and also the importance of directly addressing any negative perceptions from others about the group. So that's yeah, that's all the in terms of what I wanted to sort of tell you a bit about Co design and hopefully maybe you're inspired to go and think about how you might engage young people as well and hear about about what they think would be working in your schools or where do you work with young people.

 **Charlotte Webber** 21:49
Thank you very much, Sarah. Yeah. So I'll now play a short video again from Rose and one from Harriet, about their experience of being part of the Co design team.
I guess I just think it's.
As a design really important, although I'm not neurodivergent myself, I was so encouraging that there were so many neurodivergent people that were part of both groups and the importance of having the right voices at the centre of that essentially. So I think it's a really important project and obviously I'm very grateful to get to be part of it.
Yes, I think a lot of projects are done about autistic people without autistic people and I think.
What is important is to be able to hear the voices that are previously not been heard within the Community 'cause. Otherwise you're just going to have things that don't benefit the autistic community.
Or things that people think will benefit the autistic community, but they don't. So I think that's why it's especially important to have autistic voices. And what I really liked about this is that there were two groups. That was the Young People's group.
As well as the sort of older groups.
So you were hearing sort of voices from people that would actually, you know, be involved in these sort of programmes themselves and people that would have benefited from them when they were at school. I really enjoyed the chance to meet with other autistic people, discuss our experiences and to sort of sort of be heard and to hear each other. And I think it was, it was really good to be able to.
Be part of something that we knew would benefit others.
Would have a direct impact on autistic young people.
And yeah, it's really good to be part of research. It sort of gave me an idea of what Co designing looks like for my future research projects as well sort of gave me an idea of best practise. And like I said, yeah, a chance to meet and talk with other autistic people.
Right. And a huge thank you to Rose and Harriet for recording those little videos for us. I anticipate they might be in the audience today, but we can't see you. So I'm not sure, but yes, just to say thank you to them and to all the members of the Co design team without whom the nest resources really wouldn't be what they are. So we are incredibly grateful.
I'm going to now give you a little bit more of an in depth overview of what is actually included within the nest resources.
So as part of the Nest toolkit, you will get the Nest handbook and the nest resource pack.
Both are freely available to download and use in mainstream secondary schools and at the end of the session I'll tell you how you can access those resources if you think you might want to use them, or just if you're curious to have a little look, but I'll start by giving you an overview of what's in the handbook. So the handbook is split up into five sections. The first section is really about introducing you to nest and giving you information about neurodiversity, neurodivergence and peer support. It also gives you information about the nest, ethos and guiding principles.
These are things which came up in discussions with the Co design groups as being sort of most important for what nest groups look like in school, so this is about things to do with accessibility and student leadership, things like that. And it also gives you information to guide you through the rest of the handbook so you can see this student leadership opportunity logo which was designed by one of the members of the Young People's Co design group. Thank you, Minnie. And this student leadership opportunity logo appears throughout the handbook in all the places where we think there's an opportunity for students to get involved in designing the groups and leading the groups.
And again, this is something that emerged as really important from the Co design stage was that neurodivergent young people should be involved in designing a group for neurodivergent young people. So throughout the handbook, you'll be able to identify that logo and find all the ways in which you can help your students be involved in in leading the group. So Section 1 is really about sort of setting the scene, I suppose on nest and what we hope nest groups might be able to achieve in school.
Section 2 encourages you to stop and think a little bit about whether a nest group is right for your school or for your pupils just now, although we think that nest groups can be really beneficial for individual pupils and for a school community more broadly, and Katie's going to talk a little bit later about some of the the findings from our research around that we know that Nest Group might not be right for all schools or for all pupils. So it's really important to reflect on that before setting up a group. So in Section 2, you have the opportunity to reflect on.
The space that you have available in school where you could run a nest group, thinking about whether the space is accessible and comfortable for neurodivergent pupils, whether it's regularly available. It'll also help you reflect on the culture of the school more broadly, so whether there's culture of acceptance of difference, and whether it is sort of safe for a group of neurodivergent young people to come together and meet regularly.
It'll also give you information about reflecting on the characteristics of the staff facilitator, so all nest groups will have a member of staff which facilitates it and our Co design groups identified a number of different characteristics that they thought were really important.
About a nest group facilitator. So in this section you'll be able to reflect on some of those characteristics and think about who in your school might be a good person to facilitate the nest group.
Within that section, there are a couple of reflective guides to help you with this process, so there's a reflective guide for stuff and schools, and there's also one for pupils, both neurodivergent pupils, but also all members of the the pupil school community, to reflect on these aspects of of space and culture because we know that sometimes pupils perceptions of the school might be different from what staff perceptions are. So again, this is a really good opportunity to get young people's voices into.
The the use of nest in schools.
And make sure it really is right for you and your pupils before you set up a nest group.
If you get to the end of Section 2 and you think yes, a nest group is absolutely right for our school right now, then Section 3 will give you information about how to actually set it up so it will guide you through how you might think about advertising the group, or perhaps choosing particular students to join. And it will also have reflections from previous nest group facilitators talking a little bit about how they did things so.
Some nest group facilitators might have invited certain students to join. Some might have advertised it more broadly.
And we've got a couple of case studies and quotes from facilitators in there, just giving you a little bit more information about what they did. It'll also give you some pointers, some things to keep in mind as you're going through and thinking about what might be right for your school in particular.
Section 4 gives you information about what to do once you've set up the group, the things that you can do going forward, so it's got case studies, quotes and ideas for activities from previous nest groups. It's also got a sample activity plan, which is really a sort of structure or a framework to get you thinking about the sorts of activities you might want to do with your nest group across an academic year. For example, as we've been saying, it's really important that nest groups are student led and the activities are decided on or have input.
From the students themselves, so this might be something you want to to share with your nest group and plan together.
Sorts of things that you'll be doing across the course of the year.
Section 4 also has information about working with allies, so non neurodivergent people, whether they're staff or pupils, and how you might want to to navigate this with your group. And it's also got information about risk assessment and well-being considerations for individual activities, but also for for the nest group more generally.
Section 5 is our frequently asked Questions section, so if you get to the end of the handbook and you're still not sure about certain things, hopefully you'll find the answers in the FA QS and that section of the handbook will also signpost you back to relevant sections throughout the handbook as well to find answers to the things that you're looking for, hopefully.
Because the handbook is now published, we can't add any additional FAQs to the handbook itself, but we do have an FAQ section on the website. So if we have new questions coming in perhaps this afternoon.
Or as more people start to use nest, we'll be able to update the website with the answers to those questions. So if you have any questions as you're going through, do check the website because the answer might be on there. Section 5 also has information about the Nest team, other contributors, funders, and the terms of use as well.
The Nest Handbook is complemented by the Nest resource pack, so the resource pack contains 10 different supporting materials that you don't have to use them all. You don't have to use any of them at all, but we really just wanted to give you some more things to to help you if you're thinking about setting up a nest group, especially if it's the first time that you've run something like this. So within the resource pack, there are a number of different resources that are templates for advertising the nest groups, so there's things like information, posters, Instagram, and Facebook posts. There's some.
Four point slides in case you want to run an assembly or an information session.
There's also information about how nest links to Scottish curriculum and policy. So, as we've said, nest groups are not designed to be part of the curriculum, but they do link with some aspects of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence of getting it right for every child and the uncrc. So we've put together some information about that in case you're interested.
We've also got resources for helping you talk about neurodiversity in school, so again some information, posters and some information sheets for.
Pupils for staff and for parents, and then there's also resources to support with nest activities. So we've got some recommendations of books, films and board games which have come from members of our Co design groups, and then we've also got this planned sessions outline table which gives you ideas for activities you can do with your group, but gives you a little bit more, more detail about those. So the types of things you might want to do to prepare risk assessment and well-being considerations and the resources that you might require.
So that's a sort of whistle stop tour of the handbook and the resource pack I'm going to pass on now to doctor Katie Cibula, who's going to talk about our nest pilot schools and some of the things that that they got up to.

 **Katie Cebula** 32:38
Thanks, Charlotte. OK, so having worked with our Co design teams to really develop this nest handbook and the nest resources, what we really needed to do next was actually to see how schools found it to use all very well having the handbook. But I guess we really need to see what it was like in practise.
We were really lucky in having 4 mainstream secondary schools in different parts of Scotland who kindly offered to Rd test it for us and hello and thank you to those schools. I'm guessing some of you might be on the.
On the call as well. Really grateful to those schools for helping us. I hope so. The study we did set out to explore really where the nest is feasible and whether it's acceptable. So by feasible, we mean whether students chose to participate in a nest group where the schools were able to continue to run a nest group across a number of months. And by acceptable we meant whether it was something that staff and students found found useful and beneficial. So between October 2022 and June 2023.
As I say, we had these four mainstream secondary schools.
Who ran a neurodivergent peer support programme using the Nest Handbook and resources? The schools varied in size. They varied in location.
And they ran the group and then afterwards sort of summer term, last year we held focus groups with 24 neurodivergent students between 11 and 17 years old, who'd been participating in a nest group in the school. And we had interviews with the five school staff who were facilitators of an S group.
And the this study has been written up and submitted for publication, and you can see the QR code there, which will take you through to our pre print of that article. If you'd like to know more.
OK. In terms of what we found?
To me, the really lovely thing was that each of these four schools took the nest resources and used them in a way that suited their particular school and their particular students. So they all use the nest handbook and resources. But this wasn't for identical peer support groups.
It was something that was quite individual to them and you can see some examples here. So this school drew on the nest resources and used it to work with the students to help create a name for the group.
So this group was called the Neurodivergent peer support group, and they called it NAPS, which I love because naps at lunchtime sounds good and they use the resources to help them to create, to work with the students to create some agreed ground rules for the group to think about a programme of activities for the term and to think about how they were going to advertise the group within the school.
So all four schools use nest, but as I say, it looked a little bit different in each and that was really what we had hoped for. So for example, the groups differed in how they advertised their nest group. Some of them started quite small, maybe with some invited students and then kind of grew the group, others opened it up quite widely from the start, based on what they thought would work in their particular school.
They also differed a little bit in, I guess how they worked with the students to choose activities for the peer support group.
Whether they offered a really open choice or maybe kind of narrowed it down to four or five choices for each session, so different ways for different schools.
OK, but what did we find in our results? I want to turn first to what's what, the staff said. So our staff facilitators in the interviews, they said that they found the Nest Handbook really generally quite helpful in helping them set up their nest group.
And in prompting staff and students to generate their own ideas for the group and the staff said often that they chose to run an S group because they felt that it would align well with the.
The broad ethos of this school, the broad approach taken within the school in relation to equality, children's rights based approaches and so on, but maybe that it filled a gap at the same time. So perhaps the school already had a rights, respecting schools group or an LGBTQ plus group within the school, but maybe nothing specific for neurodivergent students. So fill in a gap, but also a fit with that broad ethos. And as Charlotte mentioned, the Nest Handbook does provide that information about how nest aligns with.
Relevant policy. Relevant legislation.
Equalities Act, children's rights and so on. The staff said that they felt that the handbook encouraged facilitators to support students to lead the group, to advertise it, to take on different roles and responsibilities, and to plan and structure activities. And they also spoke about the the benefits of nest that they saw for their students. So they talked about it being fun for students, that it helps confidence of the students in that sense of belonging.
There was one member of staff who ran a lunchtime club saying they felt it really set the students up for a kind of more positive afternoon in the class.
And stuff also highlighted that leadership aspect and the links that were created between different year groups. So when said for example the juniors meeting, the seniors has been the bigger biggest benefit. I think the seniors enjoy the feeling of being a mentor and the younger ones when they come from primary school into such a big school.
In the visible success of two seniors, how they're coping with it all and then thinking that's going to be me in a couple of years, they were great role models to them.
And staff also said that it helped kind of conversations around the school about neurodiversity, whether that kind of sprung up through advertising of the group or the group's posters, or maybe displays about neurodiversity that had been created with the help of some of those nest resources.
And staff facilitators also talked about how they use their expertise and knowledge of the students to maybe address aspects of facilitating a peer support group that might have been a wee bit challenging. So, for example, staff spoke about how some of the students maybe had conflicting needs and how, as members of staff, they approached that. So, for example, if they had students coming along who right, like to really quiet space with students who who liked.
Be maybe a little bit more loud and the approach that they took to that sometimes having quieter sessions and louder sessions for example.
They also spoke about challenges in terms of finding a kind of consistently available space for the group to meet and how they supported students when the the room change had to happen. For if a room wasn't available, for example.
And finally, they spoke about how they ensured that they supported the student led approach to ensure that students had choices, but in a way that wasn't overwhelming or wasn't out with the school's expectations for student behaviour. And again, that looked a little bit different in each school. But across them, it was really evident again, that the staff knew their students and knew the way best to support that student led approach and to scaffold it to really help ensure.
A positive experience for the students.
OK. Most importantly though, what did the students say? So the students that we spoke to in the focus groups?
The important thing to remember here is that these students we spoke to in the focus groups were students who chose to come along to a nest group, chose to keep coming back, and chose to participate in the focus groups. As Charlotte said, nest might be not for all neurodivergent students in a school, and that's of course absolutely OK.
But if the students who did come along to the group, the main thing that they said was that the group was was fun and that above all was really important to us, that it was just a place to hang out, to connect and to have a laugh.
And lots of them clearly were having a laugh. The transcripts for the focus groups. I don't think I've ever smiled so much, transcribing and analysing.
Focus group data. It was really lovely. They spoke about how Ness provided opportunities for them to socialise.
To really be able to talk freely about passionate interests that they had in a way that was framed positively within the group, so one student said I can socialise for a change. I don't usually talk to people much and I talk to people here, so that's fun.
They also spoke about how they could discuss and reflect on neurodivergence and neurodiversity, so one student said the group gives you a sort of.
Right of view on how not everyone is this, everyone's different and you get to understand that on a deeper level, in a way, some students also really spoke about their nest group as being a safe and comfortable space within the school. So one student said it's quiet. There's not too much people. It's nice, a really open space.
They also.
Spoke about that sense of belonging that staff talked about too. That really came through in the student data, so students spoke about how they felt able to be themselves within the group and how the Ness Group really facilitated the establishment of friendships between students and helped reduce feelings of loneliness. So one student said I found people similar to me, and they don't feel alone. And I think what was important there to highlight is that the friendships didn't spring up.
Overnight it, you know, wasn't the first time they came to an S group, but just gradually developed through the term of attending a nest peer support group and students talked about feeling like kind of gradually able to to open up and talk to others.
As we saw in the staff information to some of the older students used nest groups to mentor younger students. So one older student said. For me, it's kind of fulfilment. I'm influencing younger people in a good way. I'm trying to prevent letting people grow negatively.
And finally.
They spoke about the benefits of building relationships with the staff facilitator, so one said I feel it's just better with these two staff as facilitators because they have a better understanding of newer diversity than any of the other teachers. And there was a really a real sense within the student data that the context of the nest group may be led to slightly easier conversations with staff than was sometimes possible.
Within a classroom setting.
And as Charlotte said, the Nest Handbook has got information to help identify potential staff facilitators for the nest group. Obviously, some of that is about staff who have time to take this this on, but Charlotte said the Young people Co designed this resource also spoke about those key characteristics that they felt would be helpful. So compassion, understanding, ability to reflect on practise for example.
And most of the schools had one staff facilitator, but where it was possible to have two that was felt to be helpful because, you know, there was another member of staff to bounce ideas off and it also meant that if one member of staff couldn't be there one week, that there was a sense of continuity for the students as well.
OK so to summarise.
This feasibility and acceptability study this kind of pilot testing in these four schools.
Gathered qualitative data through focus groups with the students, interviews with the staff members, and it showed that nest groups have the potential to be a safe space for neurodivergent students to have fun with their peers, and that it gave neurodivergent students opportunities to really engage in their choice of activities.
When we we asked about the particular activities that they'd run, what we found was that some schools had unstructured activities, so things like Dungeons and Dragons or just hanging out and having lunch and chatting together.
Some had more structured neuro diversity focused activities, so things like beginning to develop a new diversity podcast for the school, for example, and some had a mixture of the two move in between.
Structured and unstructured, some schools did a little bit more in terms of unstructured kind of fun activities. Others did a bit more in terms of structured neuro diversity focused activities. Some did a bit of both, some move between the two across the term. So again that idea that different schools were adapting it to their students and their particular context.
The NEST study also showed it presented opportunities to build relationships based on mutual understanding and experience, and that it helped neurodivergent students to really learn about neurodiversity, explore feelings related to their own neurodivergence, and that had kind of ripples across the school.
I think in terms of really providing opportunities for the whole school to learn more about neurodivergent and for neurodivergent students to be really involved.
In decision making. So within nest it provided that context for learning a little bit in in a kind of relaxed way to think about advocacy without it being a lesson. And that just really kind of seemed to ripple out a little bit across the school.
After we'd finished the study, we analysed this data and based on what we'd found within the pilot schools, we went back to our Draught Nest handbook. We updated it, we tweaked it and as Charlotte said, we added in those some of those examples shared by the different schools and it's that final version that we're launching we're launching today.
OK, Charlotte, I'll hand back to you now.

 **Charlotte Webber** 47:15
Brilliant. Thank you so much, Katie. OK, I think that all is left for me to do is tell you how you can access and download the nest handbook and resources if you're interested in using it in your setting. Or, as I said at the start, if you're just curious to see what's in there, you can access it by going to the salverson minder and Research Centre website. So the link is at the bottom of the screen there, and we'll also send around an e-mail after the session today with the web link in there so you can access it easily when you get onto the nest homepage, you'll just need to Scroll down to this download nest button.
Click on that and it will take you to just fill out a terms of use questionnaire and then you'll be able to download and access the resources.
Before we move on to the Q&A, the last thing I have to share with you is just some final thoughts from Rose, because I think this last little video really exemplifies why we think nest groups could be so important and what we sort of hope for in terms of nest groups going forward.
Yeah, I think just in in my practise and I guess through the work I've done as an educational psychologist, but also as a teacher, I felt it was, it was a really great opportunity to do something positive in in thinking about a universal approach in school settings and being able to do that on a large scale, be part of something that, you know, I think really can make quite a significant difference for for young people.
And I think it's.
Like a really important issue for me.
To think about how that supports young people and also about how it supports schools with supporting young people as well. And so yeah, it just felt like a really a really important project to that. I've felt very fortunate to be a part of.
And I also was just really inspired by the focus being on the young people too, although I was part of an adult Co design group, the fact that there was, you know, I guess the idea coming from young people in the 1st place through the research, through the research that was already done before.
Their involvement in designing this and there and hopefully their involvement in the implementation of it in schools, that just felt like a really great thing to to be championing and be part of as well.
OK. So we're gonna open up for questions now. As I mentioned at the start, you should be able to post your questions using the Q&A function. But do remember that it might not be anonymous, so just bear that in mind when you're when you're typing in questions and do Please remember to respect confidentiality. I'm going to stop sharing the slides in a moment and I'm going to invite our three speakers back onto the screen. I'll be chairing the session today, and I'm going to be trying to direct questions to who I think might be best placed to answer them. But if you have a question for someone in particular.
Do Please note that when you send your question in so I'll stop presenting now.
Great. So I'm just going to have a little look and see if any questions have come in whilst we've been presenting and it'll also give you a little moment to to type anything into the chat.
So let's have a quick look here.
OK. So first question is for Sue. You mentioned earlier that presently it's confirmed that there are 15% of NEURODIVERGENT pupils in state schooling system and someone's noted that this figure seems quite low. Is this the diagnosed figure as opposed to those children who are likely to be eventually diagnosed and are flagged up as going through the cams process?

 **Sue Fletcher-Watson** 51:00
Yeah, thanks. I agree. I think 15% is a really low estimate and we have done a little bit of research in our team comparing things like how many neurodivergent pupils do schools think they have versus how many.
Have a diagnosis according to the NHS and you get quite different numbers from those two sources, so I think it is really hard to get an estimate of how many neurodivergent people are in a school.
It doesn't help that that there are lots of barriers to diagnosis. We know that still autistic girls, girls with ADHD are underdiagnosed. We know that if you come from a less privileged background, it can be harder to get a diagnosis. You know, there are all sorts of barriers.
So and then we also know well for me at least the sort of umbrella category of neurodivergent extends beyond our existing clinical diagnosis and our sort of learning diagnosis, things like.
Dyslexia and dyscalculia, so you know, for me, it's perfectly possible to be neurodivergent and never get any of those diagnosis. So. So in a nutshell, I think 15% is an underestimate of of the the number of pupils who might end up with a diagnosis, but also an underestimate of the number of pupils who might.
You know benefit from and be eligible for being part of a group like this.
Katie, did you want to add something briefly?

 **Katie Cebula** 52:35
Just just to add the the very specific reference we use there is a study based on primary schools and again given kind of waiting lists and so on that we would expect that by the time we get to secondary that we would see that rate higher again absolutely.

 **Charlotte Webber** 52:53
Great. Thank you very much.
Next question, I'm gonna direct to you actually, Katie.
Are you looking to explore the primary sector? Some of these ideas look like they could be brought down to P4 to P7 and a sort of related question could Ness be used outside of a school setting like a youth group for example?

 **Katie Cebula** 53:13
So with the primary school question, I would I would love to explore this in primary schools. I think it would be wonderful. It wouldn't be exactly the same. The handbook is designed for secondary schools and is very much targeted towards secondary schools. I think if we design something for primary it, it would have some similar ideas, but it wouldn't. It wouldn't look identical and obviously we would work want to work with primary school pupils as well.
I see in the chat. I think there's a.
A shout out for leans, which is another project from Edinburgh University that is focused more on helping all pupils in a school learn about neurodiversity. So that's an interesting one to look at too, in terms of peer support, you know, from conversations with staff in primary schools, a lot of schools, a lot of primary schools maybe have something like that.
Already, and it would be interesting. I think there tends to be less and secondary.
It would be interesting to go and look and see what's what is already available across primary schools and look at kind of sharing our expertise within the schools too. Second part of that question I think was about using nest in other settings outside the schools.
Youth groups, for example.
Again, I think that caveat that you know we worked with secondary pupils. We designed the surround schools and school settings.
But within that, I think there are certain there are certainly.
Some ideas about activities that might work with youth groups? There are some.
Cautions about how these activities can run safely and really thinking about pupil well-being when we run them.
So it is a secondary focused.
Resource, but there's maybe some ideas in here for other settings.
I don't know if anyone's got anything else to add Sue or Sarah or Charlotte to that. OK, grant.

 **Charlotte Webber** 55:15
No. Great, thank you. OK. Next question, our director, Sarah. So you've got an opportunity to answer questions, Sarah. And it's just about which pupils can join the group. So we've got a couple of questions related to this. Do the groups allow young people?
Who might be neurodivergent but don't have a diagnosis?
Yeah, that'll be the first question.

 **Sarah Foley** 55:39
Yeah. Thank you.
Yeah. So they offer well, the in the groups that we worked with, it's for people who identify as neurodivergent as it was the same with the Co design group.
And I think different groups then opened up to in different ways to other members of their school communities.

 **Charlotte Webber** 56:00
Brilliant. Thank you.
And someone else has asked, can students self to let select to join the nest group? Or does the facilitator lead on this?

 **Sarah Foley** 56:10
And again, and maybe Katie wants to chip in on this, but we do. Schools took a range of approaches. So as we discussed during the presentation, some group, some schools did sort of advertise the group to see and you know people could then self select, others might approach a few students to start with to see and then sort of group from there. So there was differences and I guess just to add to what I was previously saying as well.
There were differences in terms of the inviting allies into the group.
So it was quite clear that most of the young people felt it was important to have a dedicated.
Group for neurodivergent young people, but that they maybe every other week would have a an open invitation. But crucially, as you'll see in the in the resources, there was this first step at the start about creating sort of ground rules for the group, so it might be that a group in your school wouldn't want to want be open, or it might be that they were.
A little bit more close, so crusades that were given the young people themselves that that autonomy and indecide him. But Katie, did you want to come in?

 **Katie Cebula** 57:23
I I would no, I would just, no. But yes, I would just add add to that I guess that.

 **Sarah Foley** 57:26
Yeah.

 **Katie Cebula** 57:31
A member in the in the study that when we spoke to staff, some of them saying that they felt that information or sort of displays about neurodiversity and.
Neurodivergent pupils.
Or different diagnosis I guess was helpful as a first step because they said although students sort of self selected and chose to come along.
It was important for students to be able to look at a poster and say that's for me, that's something for me. And they felt that perhaps, for example, students with dyslexia didn't necessarily identify as neurodivergent. And so to be to be sort of clear about what neurodiversity meant was helpful. And I guess another thing that came up was this balance between.
The group being student led so students choosing activities and thinking about what the group would be like and what they would like to do.
And that been very important, but also for some pupils in the school, they needed to know already what the group was going to be like before they chose to come along. They they needed to to be clear about. OK, what is it? I'm. I'm coming along to hear what am I signing up to. And so in one of the schools they spoke about that they had really sort of built and had that student led approach and students had helped kind of decide how the group would be, but that they were considering, for example, maybe producing a little video or some information that showed.
More about the group once it was established, what kind of activities they did and that would help for some of the students in the school that would help them to make this really informed decision about maybe this is something I'd like to try and come along to.

 **Charlotte Webber** 59:13
Brilliant. Thank you, Katie. Does anyone on the panel have anything else they'd like to add before we move on to the next question? Great.
OK, so we've got another question actually about the sort of the mix that the attendees of the group. So maybe Katie, I'm going to call on you again, you are you are expert on the groups itself. So someone's asked how many students would you recommend having in the group and would you recommend a mix of all ages or all in one year group?

 **Katie Cebula** 59:41
So in terms of, I guess I take this from our pilot schools because they were the ones that tried it out and and found out kind of OK what works in practise.
Those schools said to us that they had between kind of four and five students. I think the largest had about 15 students, so the IT did vary a bit across the schools and what they tended to find was that they might have a kind of core group of attenders who were, you know.
Regularly turning up and came every week and other students who were maybe I guess you know, coming in, dipping in or out a little bit depending what else they had going on, depending what the group was doing that week for example.
So it it did vary a little bit and some of that is also probably down to logistics like how many staff were facilitating the group, what size was the space that they had, for example in terms of having it right across the age group.
I think that was something that we did encourage. The schools, I guess, to think about that kind of mentoring aspect and there was quite positive feedback on that. The opportunities it created very positively for some of the younger pupils to see those role models and for the older pupils to have that experience of.
Mentoring, but quite kind of informal mentoring I guess, and being a role model.
So that that we.
We did encourage there might be schools where I guess you know, that doesn't feel like the best approach and again, you know obviously that's that's OK where the groups did divide and a kind of subgroups.
That I think staff spoke about that maybe in relation to things like conflicting needs like OK, we have a choir, we can we have a loud week for example, or perhaps along the lines of the particular activities that they were doing. But by and large it was a kind of single group all meeting together.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:01:42
Thank you, Katie. Does anyone else have anything to add?

 **Katie Cebula** 1:01:43
Anything else to add?

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:01:46
No. Brilliant. OK, next question. I'll direct to you, Sue, if that's OK. Someone's asked, how do you feel about establishing boundary setting with a nest group within the Nest group? Sometimes working with neurodivergent young people, I've found that they've taken on responsibility for each other's mental health and well-being as they understand the unique challenges associated with neurodivergent life. How would you dissuade them from using each other as well-being resources or relying on each other too much?

 **Sue Fletcher-Watson** 1:02:15
It's a really good question. It's also a really hard one. Thank you, Charlotte.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:02:19
Sorry.

 **Sue Fletcher-Watson** 1:02:24
So I think a lot of the guidance and the resources around kind of planning for considering whether a nest group is right for your school and so on has to do with sort of thinking ahead to these sorts of of risks.
So.
You know, a nest group is probably not an ideal solution if you have multiple pupils who are really in in crisis, you know really having kind of severe struggles with them, mental health.
If there's, you know, significant problems with bullying and victimisation at your school, you know these sorts of things. The nesc the Nest group is is not a solution for these kinds of acute and quite kind of significant problems that we know are a widespread.
But it is intended to be a place where people do gain well-being benefits through being part of a kind of a community where they, you know, they feel.
To others and they feel like they belong and they can share.
Stories and suggestions. You know whether that's exam revision tips or just, you know, blowing off steam about something difficult that happened in PE last week, right? So we don't want to crash out the well-being benefits and and, you know, the whole, the whole notion of getting that well-being from other pupils who who are going through similar stuff day-to-day or or went through similar stuff slightly earlier in their school career.
I think facilitators need to really keep a close eye on this and I think they need to have an awareness of what other more formal supports are available to those pupils so that.
If they perceive that that pupils are sort of.
Placing a bit too much weight on each other or on the nest group to to deal with really quite serious things in their lives. They could then be using their hopefully.
You know, kind of strengthened and closer relationship with those pupils as a way to signpost alternative versions of support. So you know, this is a chance for the facilitator to get to know neurodivergent pupils in their school really well and become hopefully a kind of trusted source of information. So that could be a really positive way to get pupils.
Help when they need it that goes beyond the fairly sort of mild well-being benefits that might come.
The next group itself.
Yeah. Anyone else have anything to add on that one?

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:05:05
I can see it.

 **Katie Cebula** 1:05:08
Just that the resources themselves as we develop them, one of the things we kind of built in was thinking about kind of safety for pupils and and well-being. And so against in the resource pack against particular activities.
We've put kind of cautions, you know, think about if you've got pupils who are who really empathise very strongly with with other students, well, what will be the impact of this activity on them? Or if you decide to do this activity, you know, how do we keep pupils?
Safe and think about their well-being as we do that. So as far as we could, we try to kind of build that in and consider it. But again it would be thinking about the particular school, the particular staff and students and the activities that they were that they were undertaking.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:05:58
Right. Thank you. OK, we've got a couple of questions about the facilitator. Sarah, I wonder if you might like to answer first on this and we've just got a couple of people who's asked whether it would be important for the facilitator themselves to be neurodivergent or not.

 **Sarah Foley** 1:06:18
Yeah. So I think in the during the the Co design process, that was something that came up as.
A be good to have from the students, but that with the you know that's not something that anybody can promise, right? So again, this is all going to come back to that those first principles of is what you know what is the nest group that a right thing to do for your school at this moment in time.
And in the resources, there's some additional resources for the students themselves to to look at in terms of they can suggest qualities and look at things that they would like in a facilitator. But there is that understanding there and I guess sort of right off the bat, I've seen, you know, this is an this is a wish list potentially and we can't guarantee that a facilitator is neurodivergent or is you know has other different characteristics as well. There are going to be some limitations.
Within a school setting.
And it might, you know. So I guess there's things there around, you know, availability of staff and all those extra things there as well. I don't know whether anybody else wants to come in there.

 **Katie Cebula** 1:07:34
The the students in the study spoke about the staff facilitators as as getting your diversity and understanding.
What Neurodivergence was, and that that was important, but they also spoke about the staff facilitators as being, and I quote, cool, nice.
Feel like I can trust them, which I mean coming from a teenager's very high praise, I think so. Those qualities really came through as well.

 **Sarah Foley** 1:08:01
Yeah. And I guess just going back to that Co design process.
It's this. I was. Katie was just saying there about that understanding it's I think that it was clear that students didn't want somebody with sort of outdated views around these things and that was a clill. And so hopefully the fact that people are here means you have a sort of sort of that inkling and want to understand that or have that understanding so again.
Not saying that people need specific qualifications.
In terms of just who has certain types of awareness and things like this?

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:08:39
Thank you. A question for Katie. This person says I work in initial teacher education. Do you think we could set up a nest group for our students? It would be good to model the group for them at university to take the experience with them on placement into their probation schools. Do you have any thoughts about that?

 **Katie Cebula** 1:08:56
Oh well, get in touch with me. I would say I would love to. I would love to discuss that. Obviously, you know again, back to this, it's a resource we've designed for secondary schools.
But actually in in terms of yeah, modelling that and some of those activities I think would to me that looked like fun as well. Do you know? So yeah.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:09:22
Sue, did you have something to add there?

 **Katie Cebula** 1:09:22
Sue.

 **Sue Fletcher-Watson** 1:09:23
Yeah, I was just going to add. So I note that the the second part of this question talks about students taking it into their probation schools. And I suppose I just wanted to flag that. I think it could be quite a lot for a freshly minted teacher.
A neurodivergent teacher with you know all of the sort of neurotypical privilege that already exists within education that gives neurotypical people like me the the sort of, you know, advantage in terms of fitting in and all that kind of stuff.
It could be quite a lot to go into a new school and sort of say right, you know, I'm gonna. I'm gonna change how we do things, and I'm gonna, you know, we're gonna kind of revolutionise the school. And so that would be my only word of caution. Would just be to sort of. And I think it relates to the previous question about whether facilitators need to be neurodivergent. You know, we need to think about the sort of bird in that place is on neurodivergent staff to assume, you know, additional admin and leadership roles and all that kind of thing.
And think about how how important it is to have buy in from school leadership for this kind of initiative and how important it is that neurotypical people in the school environment contribute and kind of pull their weight as well.
To the extent that that they that they get it right, so that would just be the only bit of caution I would put out there for that.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:10:48
Right. Thank you, sue. We've got a question which I think I can answer. Someone has asked. Have you reached out to mainstream secondary schools in Scotland to let them know about nest and the launch? And if not, is there a template e-mail I can send to my school? So thank you very much. We've been trying to get in touch with, you know, as many people as we can to tell them about the launch, but we don't at the moment have a template e-mail and I think that's a really lovely idea. So that is something I can do over the next week and perhaps add to the to the website. So if you're you're here today and you're you're not working in a school, but you're thinking you might want to recommend this to your school.
We'll get some things on the website to help you approach your school to do that.
Let's see what else we've got.
So I might I'll give this one to Katie, although it's been explained that a nest group shouldn't be part of the curriculum, could it be altered to be during a timetabled class for some neurodivergent pupils? The NEURODIVERGENT pupils in my setting that would most benefit from this are on reduced timetables and I don't think a lunchtime or after school club would work well for them.

 **Katie Cebula** 1:11:53
Yeah, that's a really interesting question. And we definitely had within our pilot schools a Member, one of the staff facilitators saying, you know, these students are coming along. But this other student, you know, he says he just needs to zone out at lunchtime. He he just needs a bit of downtime.
It's very definitely. I think we've drawn a very clear distinction in the next handbook that this isn't, it isn't curriculum. It isn't designed as a lesson.
And that seemed to be for the students also seem to be very important. You know, they spoke about this, feels a bit more relaxed or this sets me up for, you know, an afternoon in the classroom.
And so thinking about, you know, being able to achieve that slightly more, whether that's physically through, you know, the kind of seating that's available in the room or the the resources, the activities.
Or just the sort of the way staff go about facilitating facilitating that.
To be important. So I think yes, thinking about well, if you're working in an ASN base for additional support needs base for example in a school and it's not possible to do something at lunchtime or after school, I think there would need to be a way of designating it so that it was clearly a nest group and it wasn't, you know, now we're doing maths now. We're doing English now we're doing the nest group and it just to students they perhaps couldn't.
Couldn't easily distinguish it from a more classroom based activity.
I'm looking to Sue, and Sarah and Charlotte, whether there's anything you might add to that.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:13:38
No, but I think so. Think we're happy.
Great. We've got another question and I'll direct this one to Sarah. Is the resource culturally sensitive or could it be used outside of Scotland?

 **Sarah Foley** 1:13:52
So the obviously the resource was developed and piloted in mainstream Scottish schools, and there are some links in the resource and on the website that link. It's more specifically to Scotland and the Curriculum for Excellence and things like this. But it's the resource is also quite flexible. So it should be able to be anticipate and really hope that it's reaches beyond Scotland. And I guess what we're hoping as well is that people use that as a template, use the resource as a template and adapt it.
As they need to, I think we've even put on the website if you want to translate it, go ahead and and do that. It would be great to see how far we go, but I'm aware this sort of within cultural differences as well. But we tried to be as inclusive as possible.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:14:43
Is anyone else have anything to add on that point?
No, somebody has asked a follow up question. So they've said further to my previous question about whether the resources can be adapted for use in one to one or peer support mentoring projects. I'm wondering if the Co design process explored the option of using a one to one model and if so, whether there was a reason that the group based model was preferred. Perhaps Sarah you were talking about the Co design, so maybe you want to come in on whether the the Co design groups talked about whether a group setting was optimal or whether they.
Had a preference for a 1 to 1 model.

 **Sarah Foley** 1:15:22
Oh, that's interesting. It'd be good to hear Katie and Sue's thoughts on this. So I, from what I can remember.
It was the idea was always more of a group because the IT was, yeah, this that was the model in which we were going into and I guess we did Co design in terms of we involved the young people and the adults in that process. However, we didn't come at this completely sort of neutral. It would be, you know, we came in thinking about developing a pair support group from the previous research that had been done. So that's why.
That's what we were going in for. We weren't going in to develop this mentoring, so that's why we so the need the next resources themselves are designed as a as a group.
But I think maybe Sue wants to to jump in as well. I had some more.

 **Sue Fletcher-Watson** 1:16:14
Well, just to to you know what you already mentioned there, which is that actually that group model came out of an earlier piece of research that I was involved with. But led by Catherine Crompton and and maybe I should just take this opportunity to say that Catherine Compton is is the kind of leader of this whole project, but has good old unforeseen circumstances have come up today, which means that she's not with us for the launch, but Catherine and I were involved in a study that that sort of inspired the grant application that led to.
The nest project that we're talking about today, and that was something I briefly mentioned, asking autistic school leavers about how they felt about peer support and and whether they felt it could have benefited from them. And you're totally right, Sarah, a really strong kind of recommendation from that was the idea of a group model.
And a very inclusive group model that wouldn't be limited by particular diagnosis or or identities. And I think part of that was about.
Just sheer numbers in the school. So I think the people that we spoke to felt that you would need a kind of critical mass of people buying into the group. The group wouldn't be for everyone. Certainly when it was brand new, there might be a lot of pupils who'd be reluctant to go along. And so having kind of open broad inclusion criteria was important for that reason.
I think they also felt that a lot of the things that they struggled with at school were very much shared across neurodivergent pupils and weren't necessarily about being autistic specifically or or whatever.
And that there was a real potential for sort of collectivism and community that would come out of being part of a group with all of the opportunity for forging different kinds of relationships. You know, some some close friendships, some, you know, sort of slightly more sparring partners, you know.
That sort of vibe, I think, was really what they were looking for rather than this idea that you have a sort of wise mentor and a, you know, perhaps younger.
A sort of, you know, trainee kind of model, I think. I think they really wanted that, that the socialness, I think that comes in a group. So that doesn't mean that one to one peer support wouldn't be appropriate, but that was really why we went into the Co designer. Sarah says, you know, we weren't, it wasn't a totally open brief. We already knew that the group model was what we were looking for.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:18:52
Thank you. A question that our director Katie, somebody says I'm a non neurotypical counsellor working in two secondary schools. Can I refer directly to nest myself or do I need to go through the schools? So I think they're asking can they just use it themselves or do they have to go through the sort of higher higher elements of the school?

 **Katie Cebula** 1:19:16
The thing the thing that we found and the thing that we certainly recommended in the handbook was that that I guess support from senior leadership within the school was really important in terms of ensuring that the staff facilitator had the time and the space to to develop the group, to support the group and to be able to continue the group even across the kind of pinch points in the year and the and the busy time. The particularly busy times.
Across the school year, and so on.
And so that, you know, which might you know, that process might be a little bit different in different schools in terms of sort of formal approval versus, you know, a conversation, but that that seemed to be important and helpful I think.
And about two, I guess that really also supported the the idea of speaking about about these kind of ripples across the school from the group these kind of positive.
Impacts.
And sometimes that was in.
In maybe in the little things you know in the in the posters and and in the displays, but also in terms of those conversations across the school and I guess other members of staff within the school.
Thinking about how how they speak about neurodiversity, but also in terms of perhaps suggesting to a pupil that this might be something for them.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:20:46
Thank you. Anyone else have anything to add to that?
No, great. We've got one more question, which is, I'm wondering if this might be used or adapted with post 16 or teenage students who are not currently attending school. I think we've talked a little bit already about using nest in in different settings, but does anyone have anything they want to say on that point in particular or anything to add?

 **Katie Cebula** 1:21:10
I would. I would just add that while it was designed for secondary, you know for sure there's resources and there are activity ideas that could maybe be pulled out, tweaked a little bit, adapted for a a particular setting.
Maybe one?
One caveat is that within the next handbook, we were quite careful to really think about.
In terms of the different activities, OK, just think about how this or in terms of how you work with students, think about how this aligns with your school's policies or your authority's policies around, you know, around positive behaviour, for example, or other aspects. And so I think within a context thinking about about that about, as Sue says, you know.
Be more specialist support that's available for for students and so on.

 **Sarah Foley** 1:22:03
And can I just maybe say that if you do go away and adapt things or you think, then we'd be, we'd love to hear about what what you do with it and and how you how you find it. So please don't be shy and getting in touch.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:22:20
Very much just having a look, I thought we were finished with our questions, but a very long question has just come in. So I'm just checking that we haven't covered it already.

 **Sue Fletcher-Watson** 1:22:30
Just Charlotte, while you're looking at that, I might just chip in quickly on on sort of licencing terms. That's the highlight of the whole launch event. So there is licencing information on the website. So and if I remember it correctly, but you know you'll have to read it and agree to it before you can download the handbook. So do read it and and sort of take the time to understand it. But if I've remembered it correctly, what that basically says is you're welcome to adapt these resources. We understand that they might need adapting to work for your setting. They're meant to be.
A sort of inspiration and a guide and a starting place.
But you do need to. I don't think you're allowed to then circulate something that you've adapted. So if you change it, let's say you translate it into French or you do a version that's for use in a university or a workplace, or you do a staff room version or any of the creative things you might try to do. We would definitely love to hear from you, as Sarah says. But you wouldn't be allowed to then.
Circulate and promote that version. That doesn't mean that there wouldn't be a pathway to doing that at some point in the future, but what we want to be very cautious about is, you know, obviously we've done a very careful, thorough process of Co designing and evaluating the original nest resource. People could do quite sort of extraordinary things. Next if they wanted to, that maybe won't have those same foundations in Co design or won't have that same kind of evaluation check. And so we just need to be really careful that that.
Those versions don't kind of proliferate because, you know, some of them could be used really brilliantly by the person who made them, but actually could actually be a bit more harmful if they get released and and start being used in an uncontrolled way. So yeah, so just a reminder that you can adapt it, but you shouldn't circulate your adaptations. But if you have a really cool idea and you want to talk to us about licencing and adaptive version, we'd love to hear from you.
Charlotte, hopefully, that long waffle is giving you a chance to read the question. I'll go back to you now.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:24:44
No, it has. Thank you, sue. Actually, I think that the the questions that are in the chat, we've sort of covered in our chat now already. I think that the four of us will still have access to the Q&A after the session. So I might go through and just type in some answers to some of those just to make sure everyone feels like their question has been answered.
But I'm conscious that we're almost at 5:30, so I think we'll we'll end the session there today.
It's just to say thank you again to all of our speakers, all the members of the Co design group, to Catherine and Francesca.
And to thank all of you for coming along today, as I mentioned, we'll send out, send out an e-mail after the session, which will have the link to the website where you can download the resources if you'd like to and the recording and the transcripts and everything will be available after the session. So do feel free to to share it with anyone else who you think might be interested.
Does anyone anyone else on screen want anything to say before we wrap up?

 **Sue Fletcher-Watson** 1:25:39
Thank you, Charlotte, for putting together such a wonderful launch event and chaperoning us all through it. So Florida State, it's been a real pleasure to have you on the project these last six months, we've really benefited from having you here.

 **Charlotte Webber** 1:25:54
Oh, thank you. Well, I'm incredibly grateful to be here. So thank you very much. We'll let you all philtre out now. Have a lovely rest of the evening. And thank you again for joining us.

 **Charlotte Webber** stopped transcription